

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-15 remain pending. By this communication, claims 1-15 are amended.

Support for the amended subject matter can be found, for example, on page 5, lines 3-14 and in Figures 1 and 2 of Applicants' disclosure.

Claim Objections

Claims 2-4 and 6-15 are objected to due to certain informalities. In particular, the Office asserts that each of the dependent claims (2-4 and 6-15) should be written to incorporate all the limitations of the parent claim. As such, the dependent claims should reference their parent claim by "the" method or "the" device. Applicants have amended these claims to reference their parent claim by either "the authentication medium" or "the device" as suggested by the Office.

The Office also asserts that claims 6-15 should be written to reference their parent claim by "the device" and not "the security device" because the parent claim (claim 5) discloses "a device." Applicants have amended these claims to reference the parent claim by "the device" as suggested by the Office.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the objection to claims 2-4 and 6-15 be withdrawn.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 2-4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention. In particular, the Office asserts that claims 2-4 fail to properly limit the method of securing access to a piece of equipment as recited in independent claim

1. Applicants have rewritten claim 2 in independent form to be directed to an authentication medium. Claims 3-4 have been amended to reference parent claim 2 by "the authentication medium."

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection to claims 2-4 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph be withdrawn.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by *Watanabe et al.* (U.S. Patent Application No. 2002/0069361, hereinafter *Watanabe*). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Watanabe is directed to a public key certificate using system and method for identifying a communicating party in a communications network. In the system and method of *Watanabe*, authentication of a person is realized using a person identification certificate (IDC). An IDC is issued for each person who wants to be certified by an identification authority (IDA) after verifying the identification of the person. *Watanabe*, pg. 7, paragraph [0155].

Each IDC includes information (template information) which identifies a corresponding person. Specific examples usable as personal identification information include biometric information (e.g., fingerprint information, retina pattern information, iris pattern information, voice print information, and handwriting information), personal identification information (e.g., seal, passport, driver's license, and a card), and any combination of a password and any personal identification previously described. *Id.*, pg. 7, paragraph [0156].

Figure 9 of *Watanabe* illustrates registration of a template and creation of an IDC. Registration of a template is performed on the basis of information acquired

using an apparatus capable of acquiring personal information (sampling information). The acquired data is transmitted online or offline to a person identification certificate authority (IDA). A user transmits his/her personal information (PIN) identifying the user to the IDA. *Id.*, pg. 12, paragraph [0248].

In the registration of the template, the IDA verifies the identification of the user on the basis of user identification data which identifies the user. The IDA also acquires personal information such as an address or a telephone number, as required. After verifying the identification of the user and other necessary data, ***the IDA assigns a person identifier to the template and stores it in a database. The IDA encrypts the template*** using the public key of the person identification certificate authority (IDA) and creates an IDC in which the encrypted template is stored. *Id.*, pg. 12, paragraph [0250].

As discussed above, *Watanabe* discloses associating a person identifier to the ID template (which comprises biometric information, for example), and then encrypting the template using the public key of the IDA, thereby resulting in a single encrypted template including an encrypted version of both the biometric information and the person identifier. The instant application discloses, rather, receiving an encrypted version of the biometric signature and receiving a personal identification code (e.g., "personal identifier"), ***and then*** matching the personal identification code with the encrypted version of the biometric signature. Accordingly, *Watanabe* does not disclose at least "an encryption step storing an encrypted version of at least one authentic biometric signature; a receiving step receiving and storing a personal identification code attributed to the party authorized to access the piece of equipment; a matching step matching the stored personal identification code with the

stored encrypted version of the at least one authentic biometric signature" as recited in amended independent claim 1, and as similarly recited in independent claims 2 and 5.

Because *Watanabe* fails to disclose each and every feature of the claimed invention, *Watanabe* cannot anticipate or render the claimed invention as recited in claims 1, 2, and 5 obvious to one skilled in the art. Claims 3-4 and 6-15 are also allowable by virtue of their dependency from either independent claims 2 or 5, and for the features recited therein.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection to claims 1-15 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) be withdrawn.

Conclusion

Based on at least the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that claims 1-15 are allowable, and that this application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants request a favorable examination and consideration of the instant application. In the event the instant application can be placed in even better form, Applicants request that the undersigned attorney be contacted at the number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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